CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Aide Memoire from the United States Government, dated February 25, 1966, in reply to the Soviet Government

The Government of the United States rejects the allegations made by the Soviet Government in its Aide Memoire of February 16, 1966. The Government of the USSR must be aware -- or could easily have ascertained -- that no nuclear weapon test, no nuclear explosion of any kind, and no radioactive pollution of the sea were involved in the unfortunate accident over the coast of Spain. Consequently, there is no question of a "violation" or of "actions in conflict with" either the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, or of the 1958 Geneva Convention on the High Seas, or of the principle of freedom of the high seas. Accusations to this effect by the Soviet Government are therefore without any foundation.

It is common knowledge that flights of US military aircraft are carried out with the agreement of nations of the free world and for the express purpose of reinforcing their collective security against the threat posed by the huge nuclear forces of the Soviet Union, including its many bomber aircraft. Our policies and practices designed to meet this nuclear threat have been adopted only after the most careful assessment of security requirements and after provision of necessary safeguards.

It is not surprising that the Government of the USSR is opposed to military security measures undertaken in defence against the threat of its armed power, or that it should attempt to limit or reduce such defence. It is, however, a matter of deep regret that the Soviet Union should be willing to distort the meaning of international treaties to suit the purpose of a propaganda campaign to that end. It seems clear that if the Soviet Government had been genuinely concerned about possible violations of international agreements and law, it would have requested, and awaited, a reply and clarification from the United States Government instead of resorting to tactics designed to advance purely propaganda objectives.

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